

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) introduced the *Veteran's Pensions Protection Act*

, legislation that will protect veterans from losing their pension benefits because they received payments to cover expenses incurred after an accident, theft, loss or casualty loss.

(Please find attached a copy of the legislation)

"My legislation will fix a loophole under existing law to ensure that pensions are issued to veterans who legitimately meet the income criteria and rely on such benefits to survive," said Hastings.

Currently, if a veteran is seriously injured in an accident or the victim of a theft and receives insurance compensation to cover his/or her medical expenses or the cost of replacement of the stolen items, he/or she will likely lose their pension.

"Such a tragedy happened to one of my constituents, a disabled veteran with muscular dystrophy who was hit by a truck when crossing the street in his wheelchair. His pension was abruptly cut off after he received an insurance settlement payment to cover medical expenses for himself and his service dog, and material expenses to replace his wheelchair. As a result, he could not cover his daily expenses and mortgage payments and almost lost his home. This to me is unacceptable," Hastings further noted.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) considers a variety of sources of revenue to determine a veteran's annual income. If such income exceeds the income limit set by the VA, the veteran does not qualify for a pension or loses his/or her benefits. The VA considers any reimbursement that compensates a veteran for their expenses due to accidents, theft or loss as income. The *Veterans Pensions Protection Act* will exempt these reimbursements from being included into the determination of a veteran's income.

"Current law effectively punishes veterans when they suffer from such an accident, theft or loss. My legislation will ensure that no veteran will have their benefits unfairly depreciated or cancelled. After serving our country so valiantly, our veterans deserve no less than the very best benefits."

Joining Hastings as original co-sponsors of the legislation include: Representatives Laura Richardson, Steve Israel, Larry Kissel, Kendrick Meek, Tim Walz, Corrine Brown, Heath Shuler, Steve Buyer, Betty Sutton, John Hall, Tom Rooney, Eric Massa, Ron Klein, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Madeleine Bordallo, Raul Grijalva, Steve Kagen, Dana Rohrabacher, and Vern Buchanan.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

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 [Veterans Pensions Protection Act of 2010.pdf](#)